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ABSTRACT

The attendance behavior of students who were new to Grand Valley State Colleges (GVSC) for both fall 1975 and fall 1976 is analyzed, comparing those who returned for winter term against those who did not. Seventy-three percent of the new students entering in fall 1975 were found to return for the winter term compared to 68 percent of those entering in fall 1976. New students without prior college experience showed better return rates from fall to winter than transfer students. Male and single new students had better return from fall to winter than did female and married new students. Also compared was the amount of internal transferring among GVSC over the first full calendar year for new students entering in fall 1975 and fall 1976. Results show the amount of internal transferring for new students entering for the fall term increased from 5.1 percent in 1975 to 6.5 percent in 1976. The enrollment patterns of new students for fall 1975 and fall 1976 were also examined over the three terms of the academic year. It was found that the percentage of new students in continuous attendance over the first academic year declined from 61.9 percent in 1975 to 55.4 percent in 1976. (SPG)

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Attendance Behavior of New Students Entering GVSC Fall, 1975, and Fall, 1976

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Highlights

- 73% of the new students entering Fall, 1975, returned Winter term compared to 68% of those entering Fall, 1976.

- WJC, DSI, and Community Education had better return rates from Fall to Winter among new students in 1976 than in 1975. All other units showed a decline.

- New students without prior college experience showed better return rates from Fall to Winter than was true for transfer students.

- Male and single new students had better return rates from Fall to Winter than did female and married new students.

- New students from outside of the three county area (Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa) had better Fall to Winter return rates than did those from within.

- The amount of internal transferring during the first full academic year for new students entering Fall term increased from 5.1% in 1975 to 6.5% in 1976.

- The number of new students for Fall who remained in continuous attendance throughout their first full academic year decreased from 61.9% in 1975 to 55.4% in 1976.

- The patterns of retention of new students from Fall to Winter terms for 1975 and 1976 paralleled the patterns for non-new students, but the retention rates were lower.

Background

Several reports on attrition and attendance patterns have been done by this office in the past. These have all focused their attention on the total student body at Grand Valley.

With the advent of the Retention Committee during the 1976-77 year, much attention has been focused on the student who is new to Grand Valley. Thus, it seems appropriate at this time to look at the attendance behavior of students who were new to GVSC for both Fall, 1975, and Fall, 1976. In each case, we will examine the following:

1) Selected characteristics of students who returned the respective Winter term as opposed to those who did not.

2) The attendance pattern over the first full year for new students entering both Fall, 1975, and Fall, 1976.

3) Some comparisons of the attendance behavior of the new entering student group compared to the rest of the total GVSC student population.

4) Internal transfer patterns.

Results (Students Returning Winter Term Versus Those Who Didn't)

Tables showing the results are in the attachment #1.

A) By college of Enrollment:

Of the 2,430 new students who entered Fall, 1975, a total of 73.09% returned Winter, 1976. This compares to 68.41% of the 2,577 new students for Fall, 1976, who returned Winter, 1977. The ranking, by percentage returning Winter term, is shown below.

Fall, 1975	Fall, 1976
CAS - 88.11%	WJC - 87.50%
TJC - 87.33%	TJC - 86.60%
WJC - 86.39%	CAS - 84.66%
CGS - 78.13%	DSI - 76.00%
CIV - 75.00%*	SGC - 64.15%
DSI - 73.47%	CIV - 57.69%
SGC - 65.52%	CGS - 42.98%
CED - 36.77%	CED - 41.89%

*Because of small numbers this percentage is not meaningful.

WJC, DSI, and Community Education increased their return rates from 1975 to 1976. All other admitting units experienced a decrease in their return rates.

B) By Admissions Status:

In both years we did better on retaining new freshman students over to the Winter term than we did with new transfer students. Both categories did, however, show a decline in return rate from 1975 to 1976. We seem to do better on retaining the new transfers from junior colleges than we do the new transfers from senior colleges.

C) By Sex of Students:

For those new students entering Fall, 1975, 75.19% of the males and 70.69% of the females returned Winter, 1976. This compares to 70.44% of the new males and 66.41% of the new females returning for Winter, 1977, from Fall, 1976. It can be seen that we experienced a drop in the return rate for both sexes from 1975 to 1976.

D) By Marital Status:

In both years, single students returned Winter term in greater proportion than married students. However, both groups exhibited a decline in the percent returning from 1975 to 1976.

E) By Geographic Area:

In each of the two years in question, new students from outside of the three county area (Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon) returned in greater proportion the following Winter term than did those from inside of the three county area. The retention rate from outside of the three county area actually increased from 81.87% in 1975 to 83.74% in 1976.

F) Summary of Fall to Winter Retention:

When the characteristics of the new students who enter during Fall term and return the following term are compared to those who don't return, it can be seen that the decline in the retention rate (from 73.09% in 1975 to 68.41% in 1976) is fairly general across colleges, the sex and marital status of the student, and their geographic origin. The exceptions are that WJC, DSI, and Community Education actually increased their overall retention. Also, the retention of students from outside of the three county area increased.

It is interesting to compare the return rate from Fall, 1975, to Winter, 1976, and from Fall, 1976, to Winter, 1977, for the new students each of the respective fall terms with the rest of the total GVSC student body enrolled the respective fall terms.

Fall, 1975, to Winter, 1976, and Fall, 1976, to Winter, 1977, Retention Rates

	Fall '75 to Winter '76		Fall '76 to Winter '77	
	New Students	All Other Students	New Students	All Other Students
CAS	88.11%	87.36%	84.66%	83.20%
TJC	87.33%	82.02%	86.60%	82.08%
WJC	86.39%	87.05%	87.50%	84.84%
CIV	75.00%	83.54%	57.69%	71.79%
DSI	73.47%	75.95%	76.00%	62.50%
CED	36.77%	53.06%	41.89%	51.57%
SGC	65.52%	75.18%	64.15%	74.47%
CGS	78.13%	72.22%	42.98%	80.00%
Total	73.09%	82.28%	68.41%	79.38%
FTIAC's*	79.80%	84.77%	72.70%	82.74%
Transfers	66.56%	79.70%	64.81%	76.01%
Males	75.19%	82.64%	70.44%	80.94%
Females	70.69%	81.79%	66.41%	77.41%
Married	59.13%	77.28%	51.59%	71.50%
Single	84.39%	74.56%	82.49%	
From 3-County area	68.41%	81.26%	61.68%	76.73%
From all other areas	81.87%	84.99%	83.74%	86.79%

*Entered without prior college credit (first time in any college)

It can be seen that the patterns exhibited by new students are a mirror of those shown in the rest of the total population, except they are more extreme. The most extreme difference between retention rates of new students versus those of the rest of the total population are in the category of married students. This is probably explained by the fact that the Access category has a high percentage of married students and Access has always had a low retention rate because many of the students enrolled as Access do not intend to continue beyond one term.

Results (Internal Transfer Patterns)

The following table shows the percentage of the new students for Fall, 1975, and Fall, 1976, who were still within their original college after four terms (whether continuously registered or not) versus the percentage who made internal transfers.

College Status After Four (4) Terms

	% Remaining in Original College		% Making Internal Transfer To Other GVSC College	
	Fall, 1975	Fall, 1976	Fall, 1975	Fall, 1976
CAS	97.8%	98.2%	2.2%	1.8%
TJC	89.3%	88.7%	10.7%	11.3%
WJC	93.2%	91.7%	6.8%	8.3%
CIV	60.0%*	90.4%	40.0%	9.6%
DSI	87.8%	90.0%	12.2%	10.0%
CED	91.6%	86.7%	8.4%	13.3%
SGC	82.8%	94.3%	17.2%	5.7%
CGS	100.0%	99.1%	0.0%	0.9%
Total	94.9%	93.5%	5.1%	6.5%

*Caution: Small numbers make this percentage rather meaningless.

The total percentage of internal transfers over the first four terms increased from 5.1% for the new students who entered Fall, 1975, to 6.5% for the new students entering Fall, 1976. The highest percentage of internal transferring in both years was done by students who originally entered SGC, DSI, CED, and TJC.

Results (Attendance Patterns Over First Three Terms)

Of the new students entering Fall, 1975, 61.9% were in attendance all three terms of that academic year, while 24.0% were here Fall term and did not return either Winter or Spring. This compares with 55.4% and 28.6% for the new students who entered Fall, 1976. All of the colleges and admitting units experienced this declining percentage of new students in continuous attendance over three terms except for TJC and Community Education. TJC's percentage of continuous attenders among new students went up from 72.7% in 1975 to 78.3% in 1976. Community Education's percentage stayed about equal over the two years.

The table showing the detail of this information is in attachment #2.

When we look at the attendance pattern over three terms for new students entering Fall term compared to the pattern for all other students enrolled in Fall term, we see that in both years the new students were less likely to be in attendance three consecutive terms and more likely to attend Fall term only.

General Summary

Selected characteristics of new students who entered Fall, 1975, and Fall, 1976, were examined, comparing those who returned for Winter terms against those who did not. We find a general decline in the retention rate from Fall, 1975, to Fall, 1976, which is fairly general across the characteristics examined.

We also compared the amount of internal transferring going on among GVSC colleges over the first full calendar year for new students entering Fall, 1975, and Fall, 1976. Here we found an increase from 1975 to 1976 in the percentage of new students making a college change.

Finally, we examined the enrollment patterns of new students for Fall, 1975, and Fall, 1976, over the three terms of the academic year. We discovered that the percentage of new students in continuous attendance over the first academic year declined from 61.9% in 1975 to 55.4% in 1976.

Winter Term Enrollment of New Students Entering Fall Term

Table #1a (By College)

	New Fall, 1975	% Returned Winter, 1976	New Fall, 1976	% Returned Winter, 1977
College of Arts & Sciences	1,346	88.11%	1,252	84.66%
Thomas Jefferson College	150	87.33%	97	86.60%
William James College	147	86.39%	144	87.50%
College IV	8	75.00%	52	57.69%
Developmental Skills Institute	49	73.47%	50	76.00%
Community Education	669	36.77%	814	41.89%
Seidman Graduate College	29	65.52%	53	64.15%
College of Graduate Studies	32	78.13%	114	42.98%
Total	2,430	73.09%	2,577	68.41%

Table #1b (By Admissions Status)

	New Fall, 1975	% Returned Winter, 1976	New Fall, 1976	% Returned Winter, 1977
First Time in College	1,198	79.80%	1,176	72.70%
Transfers from:				
Mich. Jr. College	604	73.01%	602	72.92%
Mich. Sr. College	480	57.71%	617	56.89%
Non-Mich. Jr. College	24	70.83%	15	66.67%
Non-Mich. Sr. College	112	69.64%	135	63.70%
Foreign College	12	58.33%	18	72.22%
Total Transfers	1,232	66.56%	1,387	64.82%

Table #1c (By Sex)

	New Fall, 1975	% Returned Winter, 1976	New Fall, 1976	% Returned Winter, 1977
Male	1,294	75.19%	1,289	70.44%
Female	1,136	70.69%	1,286	66.41%

Table #1d (By Marital Status)

	New Fall, 1975	% Returned Winter, 1976	New Fall, 1976	% Returned Winter, 1977
Married	624	59.13%	690	51.59%
Single	1,806	77.91%	1,887	74.56%

Table #1e (By Geographic Area)

	New Fall, 1975	% Returned Winter, 1976	New Fall, 1976	% Returned Winter, 1977
From 3-County area	1,586	68.41%	1,790	61.68%
From all other areas	844	81.87%	797	83.74%

Table 2a
Enrollment Patterns for New Students Fall, 1975
Over First Three Terms
(Expressed in % of Total by College)

	CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	DSI	CED	SGC	CGS	Total
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. & Spr.	78.6%	72.7%	76.9%	50.0%	59.2%	23.2%	51.7%	68.7%	61.9%
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. only	9.5%	14.7%	9.5%	25.0%	14.3%	13.6%	13.8%	9.4%	11.2%
Enrolled Fall, Spr. only	0.8%	0.6%	0%	0%	2.0%	7.7%	6.9%	9.4%	2.9%
Enrolled Fall only	11.1%	12.0%	13.6%	25.0%	24.5%	55.5%	27.6%	12.5%	24.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2b
Enrollment Patterns for New Students Fall, 1976
Over First Three Terms
(Expressed in % of Total by College)

	CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	DSI	CED	SGC	CGS	Total
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. & Spr.	75.2%	78.3%	76.4%	48.1%	58.0%	23.7%	41.5%	28.1%	55.4%
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. only	9.5%	8.3%	11.1%	9.6%	18.0%	18.2%	22.6%	14.9%	13.0%
Enrolled Fall, Spr. only	1.7%	2.1%	0.7%	7.7%	0%	4.2%	7.6%	8.8%	3.0%
Enrolled Fall only	13.6%	11.3%	11.8%	34.6%	24.0%	53.9%	28.3%	48.2%	28.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2c
Enrollment Patterns for All Non-New Students Enrolled Fall, 1975
Over Three Terms--Graduates Excluded
(Expressed in % of Total By College)

	CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	DSI	CED	SGC	CGS	Total
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. & Spr.	75.6	64.2	74.4	50.6%	59.5	36.8	59.2	63.9	68.2
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. only	9.9	15.8	11.4	32.9	16.5	15.6	14.6	8.3	12.0
Enrolled Fall, Spr. only	3.0	3.3	2.5	1.3	2.5	8.3	8.5	5.6	3.8
Enrolled Fall only	11.5	16.7	11.7	15.2	21.5	39.3	17.7	22.2	16.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2d
Enrollment Patterns for All Non-New Students Enrolled Fall, 1976
Over Three Terms--Graduates Excluded
(Expressed in % of Total By College)

	CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	DSI	CED	SGC	CGS	Total
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. & Spr.	74.7	71.2	76.7	62.4	52.1	35.1	60.6	68.1	69.6
Enrolled Fall, Wtr. only	8.2	11.8	8.3	9.4	10.4	16.4	13.1	11.7	9.6
Enrolled Fall, Spr. only	3.5	2.6	3.4	9.4	2.1	8.0	6.6	5.3	4.1
Enrolled Fall only	13.6	14.4	11.6	18.8	35.4	40.5	19.7	14.9	16.7
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%